

**Agency: Natural Resources****Project Title:****Project Type:** Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades

# Crow Pass - Eagle River - Alaska Long Trail

**State Funding Requested:** \$1,500,000**House District:** 14 / G

One-Time Need

**Brief Project Description:**

Design/Build project - full master plan for relocations/sustainable trail + phase 1 work on this CSP flagship backcountry hunt/hike route

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$1,500,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2023 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$1,500,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:****PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This Alaska Long Trail project would upgrade the popular, spectacular but degrading Crow Pass Trail in Chugach State Park, which connects Girdwood and Eagle River. The 21-mile trail ascends from the Crow Creek Trailhead in Girdwood, through talus fields and mine ruins up to Crow Pass, near the toe of Raven Glacier. The trail descends from the snowfields and lakes at the pass, through alpine meadows and forests to a ford on Eagle River (no bridge yet). The route then trends west, paralleling Eagle River to the Eagle River Nature Center. This route is formally designated as a portion of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and is the premier overnight, point-to-point trail in Chugach State Park.

Like the majority of trails in Alaska, this "trail" is just an informal social route worn in by users over the years. Significant portions the route need to be relocated and rebuilt. Chugach State Park staff and professional trail builders have done the preliminary in-field work needed to lay out the routes and estimate costs for this section needing substantial improvements, focused on the Eagle River Valley: In much of this area the route is immediately adjacent to the actively eroding river. A growing percentage of the trail is disappearing into the river. This project would fund the critically needed trail reconstruction and reroute of about 5 miles of this 12-mile stretch of the trail, lifting the trail onto more stable and sustainable higher ground.

**BENEFITS AND NEED**

The planned upgrade will significantly upgrade and reroute a high value, deteriorating trail, delivering the following benefits:

1. Upgrade one critical link of the full Alaska Long Trail, and at the same time, provide a much improved day or short overnight recreation amenity, close to Alaska's largest city and most visited destination.
2. Upgrade an important, historic section of the Iditarod supply route, including evidence of historic mining activity along the route.
3. Further expand options and opportunities on a trail important to local commercial outfitters and guides.
4. Greatly improve safety of an increasingly hazardous trail, reducing regularly search and rescue costs to the state.
5. Replace a near impossible-to-maintain social trail with a purpose-built, durable and sustainable trail.

**LAND OWNERSHIP**

The first 3 miles of the trail, from the Girdwood Trail head to Crow Pass crosses through Chugach National Forest. The remainder of the route, and all the projects outlined here, are entirely within Chugach State Park.

**PROJECT LEAD AND PARTNERS**

Project lead: DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Chugach State Park

Partners: Alaska Trails' Trail Stewards Program (volunteer and paid trail crews)

**PROJECT STATUS**

This project is in the 2016 Chugach State Park Trail plan, and needs final route determination (design) and funds to carry out the needed improvements.

USE: Hiking, Backcountry skiing

**ESTIMATED COST**

Trail survey and design \$350,000

Eagle River Valley section \$900,000

Trail-side facilities to support and manage impacts of growing use including hardened campsites, restrooms, signage.  
\$150,000

Project oversight and management \$100,000

Total: \$1,500,000

**Project Timeline:**

2023

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

AK DNR DPOR and volunteers/nonprofits

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No